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THE GENERAL STAFFS OF CERTAIN BELLIGERENT
POWERS

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S Y N O P S I S .

I. INTRODUCTION.

| | Page. |
|--|-------|
| 1. The general staff of the Austro-Hungarian Army..... | 5 |
| 2. The general staff of France..... | 6 |
| 3. The general staff of Germany..... | 8 |
| 4. The general staff of Great Britain..... | 8 |
| 5. The general staff of Italy..... | 9 |
| 6. The general staff of Japan..... | 9 |
| 7. The general staff of Russia..... | 10 |
| 8. The general staff of Servia..... | 11 |

II. CONCLUSION.



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THE GENERAL STAFFS' OF CERTAIN BELLIGERENT POWERS.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The object of this study is to give a concise account of the general staffs of certain belligerent powers taking part in the present European war, showing their personnel and duties under peace conditions, and also any increases or changes that have been made necessary during the progress of the present war, so far as data are at present available.

It is proposed to supplement this paper with full information as to any further changes in general staff organizations resulting from the experiences of the present war, when the necessary data have been supplied.

1. THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY.

The work of the general staff of this army, 1911, included: (1) Service in the offices of the general staff; (2) with troops; (3) in special scientific military employment; and (4) for missions abroad.

"The chief of the general staff for all the armed forces" was the head of the general staff, and was under the immediate orders of the Emperor, and was also an auxiliary organ of the war minister. All work relating to operations and to preparation for the employment of the entire armed force in war was incumbent upon him. He kept in touch with the commander of the navy regarding operations of the fleet. He was assisted in his work by the "deputy chief of the general staff."

The general staff worked in seven sections.

The first section transacted personal and economic affairs and did the correspondence between the sections of the general staff and with outside quarters.

The section for operations worked at all operative affairs, the measures in connection with mobilization, plans for strategic movements, opinions and proposals regarding fortifications, organization and training of the army, regulations and instructions of a tactical and operative nature, programs for maneuvers and matters connected therewith.

The section of instruction attended to the instruction and training of general staff officers.

The topographical section was employed in the military geographical description of the monarchy and other countries.

The intelligence section collected and recorded data concerning foreign armies and fortifications.

The railway section attended to all railway and steamship matters.

The telegraph section attended to the telegraph and signal service.

The general staff attended to the war school, the Military Geographical Institute, and the war archives.

The general staff officers serving with troops performed duties corresponding to the combined duties of chiefs of staff and adjutants general in the United States Army.

The normal strength of the general staff in time of peace, 1911, was:

One general, chief of staff; 2 lieutenant field marshals—one the deputy chief of staff, the other the chief of the military geographical institute; 2 major generals—one chief of the war archives and the other the chief of the war school; 41 colonels, 77 lieutenant colonels, 85 majors, and 209 captains; total, 417. After completing studies at the war school 209 additional officers were attached to the general staff for duty and try out, with a view to their possible appointment on the general staff. In addition there were 46 other officers for clerical work on the general staff, but not with a view to being appointed members of the general staff. Total performing general-staff work, 672.

In time of war the chief of staff takes full control of military matters. According to information on file in the War College, 1914, the Austrian general staff was as follows:

One chief of staff, 1 adjutant to the chief of staff, 2 assistant chiefs of staff—one in charge of lines of communication. The part of the general staff corresponding to our War Department General Staff was divided into eight bureaus: Bureau of direction, bureau of operations, bureau of communication and supplies, bureau of instructions, bureau of monographs, bureau of evidence, bureau of transportation, bureau of telegraphy, and was charged also with the war college, war archives, and military geographical institute. The number of general-staff officers allowed by law was 508; 249 officers were assigned and 71 attached to the general staff; and 101 line officers were detailed on general-staff work, making a total of 929 officers performing general-staff work.

2. THE GENERAL STAFF OF FRANCE.

The general staff of the French Army is one of the seven main divisions of the war department. Military matters, unless they concern more than one department of the National Government, are

directed by the superior military council, which consists of the minister of war, the chief of staff, and 10 major generals. The superior military council exercises control over the general staff. One of the major generals of the superior military council is assistant chief of staff; others are assigned in time of peace to command armies in time of war, and have with them the three general-staff officers to be on their staffs in the field. These prospective army commanders have, in time of peace, supervision of the troops that would be under their command in war. They prepare and direct the maneuvers and staff rides for the training of these troops and generally see to their preparation for war. They are army inspectors.

The chief of staff is the head of the war department general staff, and deals with the larger questions. Other general-staff matters are under the assistant chief of staff. The work of the war department general staff is performed by three groups, each under a general officer.

FIRST GROUP.

1. The bureau of military operations and general training of the army.
2. The bureau charged with the study of the organization and tactics of foreign armies.
3. The bureau of railways and lines of communication.

SECOND GROUP.

1. Bureau of organization and mobilization of the army.
2. The African section.
3. The historical section.

THIRD GROUP.

1. The section of the personnel of the general staff.
2. Routine service section of the general staff.
3. The administrative section.

The chief of staff, assistant chief of staff, and the chief of the first group are major generals. The chiefs of the second and third groups are brigadier generals. In addition the following general staff officers were authorized by law before the present war: Thirty colonels, 40 lieutenant colonels, 170 majors, and 400 captains; total 640.

General staff officers were assigned as follows: War Department general staff, 132; staff with troops, 480; additional staff officers with the war department general staff, 47; with troops, 216. The general staff is larger now.

3. THE GENERAL STAFF OF GERMANY.

The general staff of Germany consists of the war department general staff (called the great general staff) and the general staff officers on duty with the troops.

The officers of the war department general staff performed, in peace, the following duties:

One general, chief of staff, directly under the Emperor, and has charge of the war academy and the land survey; 1 lieutenant general, assistant chief of staff, chief of division; 4 major generals, heads of four divisions; 11 colonels, chiefs of sections; 6 lieutenant colonels, four of them are chiefs of sections; 37 majors, duty with sections and committees; 52 captains and 1 lieutenant performing various general staff duties; total 113.

This part of the general staff is organized into 9 sections and the historical and geographical departments. It has complete charge of the mapping of the country and of the maps of Germany and other countries.

The general staff officers on duty with the troops are under the orders of their commanders, but special work may be assigned to them by the chief of staff.

Before the present war the general staff of Germany consisted of 1 general, 2 lieutenant generals, 6 major generals, 23 colonels, 21 lieutenant colonels, 116 majors, 139 captains, and 1 lieutenant, total 309. Additional officers performing general staff duties were: Three colonels, 13 lieutenant colonels, 44 majors, 36 captains, and 132 lieutenants; total attached officers 228, total number of officers performing general staff duties 537.

4. THE GENERAL STAFF OF GREAT BRITAIN.

The general staff at the war office has the following duties: To advise on the strategical distribution of the army; to supervise the education of the officers and the training and preparation of the army for war; to study military plans for offense and defense; to collect military information, and to direct the general policy in army matters.

The general staff with troops has the following duties: To assist the officers on whose staffs they serve in promoting military efficiency, and to aid them in carrying out the general policy in army matters.

The general staff at the war office, known as department of chief of general staff at army headquarters, was divided into three branches: Military operations, staff duties, and military training. A major general was in charge of each. General staff officers in this

department: Three major generals, 6 colonels, 21 lieutenant colonels and majors, and 27 captains. Total, 57.

The general staff officers with troops were: One major general, 6 brigadier generals, 16 colonels, 54 lieutenant colonels and majors, 12 captains, and 25 brigade majors. Total, 114.

Besides the 171 general staff officers other officers were attached to the general staff to perform general-staff duties.

Great Britain was short of officers, and the general staff was somewhat depleted at the beginning of the present war. The British press has attributed grave errors of the war to this lack of an adequate general staff. Influential Englishmen are advocating a general staff on the German plan.

5. THE GENERAL STAFF OF ITALY.

The latest information found at the war college shows the chief of the general staff of Italy was intrusted with the preparation, in time of peace, and execution, in time of war, of all military operations, but under the minister of war; and that the general staff consisted of 260 officers.

The war department general staff, called the great general staff, consisted of three sections: The central section, the section for military operations, and the section for railways and communications. The central section supervised the work of the others. The section for military operations was divided into five subsections, and the section for railways and communications was divided into three subsections.

The general staff officers on duty with troops performed duties that are performed in the United States by General Staff officers and by adjutants general.

6. THE GENERAL STAFF OF JAPAN.

The general staff has charge of the national defense and the employment of the military forces of the Empire. The chief of staff is directly under the Emperor and assists in the business of the imperial personal staff. All things relating to national defense and strategy are in his province. Furthermore, he has under his supervision all staff officers of the army and their training. Directly under his jurisdiction are: (1) General staff headquarters; (2) the land survey department; (3) the army staff college; and (4) the military attachés at embassies and legations.

A vice chief of staff assists the chief and supervises the business of general staff headquarters.

The subjects dealt with by the general staff are:

1. Defense of the Empire and plans of mobilization.
2. Statistics of foreign armies.
3. Communications and transportation of troops.
4. Geodesy and topography.
5. Historical work.

The work of the war department general staff, designated the great general staff, is performed in 5 divisions divided into 10 sections. One of the divisions is designated "general affairs"; the others are numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4. The chief of staff is a general; the vice chief of staff, a lieutenant general; the chief of each division is a major general, and the chief of each section is a colonel.

The general staff office at Tokyo consists of 1 general, 1 lieutenant general, 5 major generals, 10 colonels, 8 lieutenant colonels, 21 majors, and 33 captains. Total, 79. In connection with these are 72 other officers, making a total of 151 officers performing war department general staff duties May 1, 1915. They were assisted by 44 warrant and noncommissioned officers and 5 civilians. Under the chief of staff, the land survey department consists of 35 officers, 161 warrant and noncommissioned officers, and 135 civilians; the army staff college consists of 58 officers, 15 warrant and noncommissioned officers, and 14 civilians.

The exact number of general staff officers serving with troops in the Japanese Army is not stated in the reports received at the War College. It is understood that the strength, organization, and duties of the Japanese general staff are about the same as in other good, modern armies. The organization of the Japanese general staff is not fixed by law. It depends on the orders of the Emperor and usually changes slightly from year to year.

7. THE GENERAL STAFF OF RUSSIA.

The latest figures on this organization, found at the War College, show the general staff of Russia consisted of 734 officers. The general staff of that country was organized on modern lines in 1906. The chief of the general staff was part of the war ministry. In 1914 the headquarters directorate of the general staff consisted of the following six branches:

The quartermaster general's branch, consisting of seven sections; organization and administrative branch, seven sections and two subsections; mobilization branch, four sections; military communications branch, eight sections; topographical branch, three sections; aviation branch, two sections.

The Russian Army, like other modern armies, has general staff officers serving with troops.

8. THE GENERAL STAFF OF SERBIA.

In Serbia the general staff is included in the ministry of war. Part of the general staff officers serve with troops, as in the United States. The chief of staff and the assistant chief of staff had headquarters at Belgrade. The general staff is divided into three sections: (1) The operative section, divided in three parts, (*a*) personnel and matériel on campaign, (*b*) intelligence, (*c*) communications; (2) historical section, including (*a*) archives, (*b*) library; (3) geographical section, which includes four subsections, (*a*) trigonometrical, (*b*) topographical, (*c*) supplies, (*d*) mapping.

II. CONCLUSION.

In regard to our own General Staff, the act of Congress approved February 14, 1903, creating it established its status and duties on lines entirely in accord with the approved practice in European armies, and, so far as known, the experiences of the present war have proved the soundness of this action.

Actual experience, however, has shown conclusively that the personnel originally provided for our General Staff was too limited for the comprehensive duties required of it, even for our small Army. A further bar to progress was imposed by the act of Congress approved August 24, 1912, whereby the already meager personnel was reduced by one general officer and eight captains. Under the present law it consists of 2 general officers, one of whom is Chief of Staff, 4 colonels, 6 lieutenant colonels, 12 majors, and 12 captains (or first lieutenants); total, 36. In addition, the Chief of Coast Artillery and the Chief of the Division of Militia Affairs are also members of the General Staff, *ex officio*. The permanent station of these latter officers is in Washington, but the specific duties for which their offices were created to perform occupy their full attention and, properly speaking, are not duties pertaining to the General Staff any more than are those of the Chief of Engineers, Chief Signal Officer, or other bureau chiefs. As a matter of fact, they only do General Staff work when temporarily acting for the Chief of Staff and his senior assistant during the absence of those officers, and this duty is in addition to their normal functions.

At the present time the War Department General Staff consists of 2 general officers, 2 colonels, 5 lieutenant colonels, 9 majors, and 11 captains, total 29, leaving for service with troops 2 colonels, 1 lieutenant colonel, 3 majors, and 1 captain, total 7.

Because of this insufficient personnel the General Staff has been unable to undertake some of its most important functions. For example, no historical section can be established, and until this is done

the scientific military history of our various wars can not be written. Our lack of a definite military policy was largely due to the fact that we are without such histories and have consequently not learned the lessons to be derived from our own experience in war.

We can not utilize to its full extent the important information gathered abroad, because we can not assign officers to the exclusive duty of reading and digesting these reports, due to the requirements of the daily routine General Staff work pertaining to the Army, which must be first attended to.

For the same reasons we can not properly attend to the work of preparing monographs and maps pertaining to foreign countries, matters which should be always kept up to date.

One thing which prevents even our meager General Staff from rendering such efficient service as it might is the continual change of status of General Staff officers before the full detail of four years has expired. This is partly due to the fact that the present law does not provide for the retention of officers who are promoted. This defect could be remedied by providing that an officer promoted should serve out the balance of his detail in the next higher grade, the vacancy in the grade from which he was promoted not being filled until the completion of his term. This would not change the total number of officers on the General Staff detail and would greatly benefit the service by permitting continuity of work by men thoroughly trained to it.

A careful consideration of this matter shows that our War Department General Staff should consist of 94 officers of all grades, and that at the present time there should be available for service with troops not less than 27. This has been shown in detail in special studies (WCD 639-103, Nov. 15, 1915, "Reorganization of the General Staff," and WCD 9054-5, Jan. 3, 1916, "Report on the Chamberlain bill in connection with number of General Staff officers").

